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RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3976
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1442
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUL 5236
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9776
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2654
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 2493
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000935

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PM NARROWLY AVOIDS CENSURE; VARIED PROTESTS
CONTINUE

REF: LIMA 918 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Amb. P Michael McKinley for reasons 1.4b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Congress's censure motion against PM Simon and Interior Minister Cabanillas fell short of the 61 votes required to remove them from office. Simon earlier announced he would step down in the coming weeks, while reports indicate that Garcia may soon reshuffle his Cabinet while keeping Simon as PM. Meanwhile, protesters in Sicuani, Cuzco announced they had resumed their indefinite strike, ending a 72-hour truce. The Sicuani protests were overshadowed by unrelated 24-hour public transit strikes in Lima and various other cities. End Summary.

Simon, Cabanillas Survive Censure Vote

¶2. (C) As predicted (refs), proponents of the censure motions against Prime Minister Yehude Simon and Interior Minister Mercedes Cabanillas fell short of the 61 votes required for their removal from office. Members of Congress from nearly all blocs voted in favor of censure but reached only 56 votes, with the ruling party APRA voting against censure and the left of center Union for Peru (UPP) bloc abstaining. (Note: Rumors are circulating that the UPP agreed to abstain after reaching an agreement with the ruling APRA party that would place at least one of their members in the Cabinet, after an expected reshuffle, or in Congress's central leadership committee. End Note.)

¶3. (C) The near miss vote probably fell short in part thanks to the absence of seven PNP who were suspended for 120 days earlier in the month. Regardless, there are reports Garcia may soon reshuffle his Cabinet, and he has said that he intends for Simon to remain as Prime Minister. Simon had earlier stated he would step down after protests calmed down, but more recently proposed that a new Cabinet include members of the opposition. For its part, Congress's extraordinary session is scheduled to end July 3, when summer recess formally begins and legislators initiate formal negotiations on Congress's next President and central leadership committee, or "mesa directiva," to be elected at the end of July.

Protests Continue Elsewhere in the Country

¶4. (C) Protesters in Sicuani, Cuzco announced they had resumed their indefinite strike, ending a 72-hour truce

during which protest organizers discussed (and rejected) PM Simon's proposed solutions to their demands to stop mining concessions, a hydroelectric power project, and a water law. The media are also reporting villagers from Chumbivilca, Cuzco, joining in on the strike with plans to march into Cuzco city and then to Lima. According to contacts in Cuzco, business continued as usual in the region, despite a roadblock in Sicuani and the possibility of thousands of protesters marching into the city.

¶5. (U) Meantime, unrelated nation-wide 24-hour public transit strikes in Lima, Puno, Junin, Ayacucho, and Cuzco took place June 30. Public transit workers are protesting the planned late July implementation of new laws that seek to impose order on Peru's traffic chaos and could bring steep fines for traffic violations. Taxis and buses were scarce in Lima, and organizers claimed 60,000 vehicles took part. Protesters blocked streets, broke windows and slashed tires of vehicles that did not participate in the strike, and convened in front of the Congress building before being dispersed with teargas by the police. Over 100 protesters were arrested for vandalism and inciting violence. Outside Lima, transit protests were generally small, with scattered roadblocks.
MCKINLEY